

Unveils bill to help prosecute public officials

CHICAGO – Before leaving Washington for the October work period, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (IL-05) unveiled legislation to fight corruption at all levels of government. The Honest Services Restoration Act requires public officials at the federal, state and local levels to disclose potential conflicts of interests and prohibits them from using their official positions for personal benefit.

“When the Supreme Court narrowed the scope of the federal fraud statute, it created a loophole for public officials who misuse their office for personal gain,” said Quigley. “But as my home state of Illinois knows all too well, prosecutors must be able to bring to justice those who betray the public’s trust. This bill ensures that our public officials will be held accountable, and sends an important message that an open and honest government is the only government that works.”

The bill was crafted in response to numerous recent government scandals, including the accusations against former Governor Rod Blagojevich. It restores a tool used in the cases of former Governor George Ryan and former City of Chicago official Robert Sorch that has been used for decades by prosecutors across the country to root-out and respond to public corruption.

For decades, prosecutors used what is known as the “honest services provision” to address two forms of fraud by public officials: (1) bribes and kickbacks, and (2) undisclosed conflicts of interest resulting in personal financial gain. However, earlier this year, the United States Supreme Court narrowed the scope of the statute, wiping out the second category.

Unfortunately, a public official’s own conflicting financial interests can be every bit as damaging to the integrity of government as a bribe or kickback. The Honest Services Restoration Act fixes this problem and ensures federal prosecutors can hold public officials accountable to their constituents.

In his first term in Congress, Quigley has made good government and ethics reform the cornerstone of his legislative agenda. Earlier this week, Quigley’s [State Ethics Law Protection Act \(SELPA\) passed the House of Representatives](#)

. SELPA would allow Illinois and other states to pass anti-pay-to-play legislation without

interference from the federal government.

Quigley, along with Rep. Judy Chu (CA-32), is a lead co-sponsor of The Honest Services Restoration Act, which was introduced by Rep. Anthony Weiner (NY-09).